

Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences
(IMEMO)

Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences (IAF)

Tropical Africa: Civilization and Modernity.

Conference Program

April 17-18, 2003, Moscow, IMEMO

April 17

Welcoming Address — A.M. Vasilyev, Corresponding Member of Russian Academy of Sciences, Director of IAF.

Introduction — V.G. Khoros, Dr. Sc. (Hist.), Head of the Center for Development and Modernization Studies, IMEMO.

Session 1.

Particularities of the Development and Basic Features of Tropical Africa's Civilization.
Presentation: V.I. Sledzevsky, Dr. Sc. (Hist.), (Center for Civilization and Regional Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences).

Round-table Discussion.

Major Subjects:

Civilization Status of Tropical Africa. Correlation between Civilization Processes and Ethnogenesis (Civilization of Tropical Agriculture). Pre-axial Nature of African Civilization. Inseparability, Syncretism of the Sacral and the Secular. Mythology as the Core of Social Consciousness and Culture.

Pan-vitalism. Life as the Supreme and Universal Value (of Nature, Cosmos, Man, Group, Ancestors).

Lineage — Community — Extended Family as Basic Social Cells. Gender-Age and Professional Groups of Caste-like Type.

Legitimization of Power through Sacral-Genealogical Relations and Magic Rituals.

Correlation between Labor, Wealth, Property (Ownership) and Archaic Society.

Limited Role of Towns.

Session 2.

Historical Dynamics of Tropical Africa's Civilization.

Presentation: M.D. Nikitin, Cand. Sc.(Hist.), Saratov State University.

Round-table Discussion.

Major Subjects:

Adaptability as the Key Feature of Tropical Africa's Pre-Colonial Civilization.

Specific Features of Colonialism in Africa (Recent Arrival, Peculiarities of Civilization

Interaction between the Colonizers and the Colonized, Symbiosis of Colonial and Traditional Political Units, etc.).

Destructive Effect of Slave- Trade.

Transformation of Traditional Economy into Colonial Economy Based on Agriculture and Raw Materials.

Fragmentary, Superficial Character of Modernization of African Societies during Colonialism

(social differentiation at the very initial stage, a very small proportion of educated people, etc.).
Africanization of Christianity and Islam.
National-Liberation Movements and their Components.
The Role of African Diasporas in the Formation of the Ideology of Civilization Renaissance
("Negritude", "Afro-socialism", Pan-Africanism).
Realities and Theories. Testing Theories in Real Life after Gaining Independence (1960s-1970s).

April 18

Session 3.

Tropical Africa: Civilization and Modernity.

Presentation: E.E. Lebedeva, Cand. Sc. (Hist.), IMEMO

Round-table Discussion.

Major Subjects:

The Place of Africa in Global Economic, Information And Political Ties. "Deep South".

Statehood, Clan-Tribal Ties, Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie, Organized Crime and Corruption (or, according to L.V. Geveling, "system cleptocracy"). Indigenous Notions of the Distribution of Material Values and Western Consumer Standards.

Programs of Neo-Liberal Structural Adaptation and Endeavors to Carry out Political Democratization.

Aggravation of Environmental Problems.

Ethno-Central Character of African Identity.

The Role of Islam in Tropical Africa's Civilization Dynamics.

African Renaissance, NEPAD (New Economic Partnership for African Development)—New Strategy for Tropical Africa in the 21st Century.

African Intellectual Diaspora in the West.

International Community's Responsibility for the Future of Tropical Africa's Civilization.

Concluding Remarks:

V.G. Khoros, Dr. Sc. (Hist.).